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FILE

3 July 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Robert Amory, Jr.

SUBJECT: Comparison of USA and URSS Exhibits at the Brussels Universal and International Exhibition 1958

ENCLOSURE: USSR Brochure "From Wooden Plough to Sputnik"

1. Returning to London from the ARC Meetings at Wiesbaden on 20 June, I had the opportunity to spend some 6 hours at the Brussels Universal and International Exhibition. Half of the time was spent in making a reconnoiter of the Exhibition Grounds and the other half was spent in reviewing the USA and URSS Exhibits. Although I have no responsibilities or particular talents for Trade Fair reporting and had only a few hours in Belgium, I would like to offer a few personal observations of the USA and URSS exhibits.

2. From the outside the U.S. Exhibition Building looks brilliant. It is situated near the URSS exhibit but it is located on higher ground, is well shaped and set off by reflecting pools, fountains, flags, etc. Some sort of gold anodizing has been applied to the steel and aluminum structural members and the flash of gold and glass in the sunshine is exceedingly attractive and makes a more than favorable contrast to the URSS structure which is somewhat larger but more conventional in design. The people were streaming in droves toward each exhibit.

3. It is when one starts comparing interior organization and displays that the full realization comes as to how badly the U.S. show stacks up against the Soviet masterpiece. The Russians haven't overlooked a trick. Their displays are brilliant. Massive photo murals of high quality, well annotated and full of impact tell the big story. Growth! Where they were in 1940, in 1957 and expect to be in 1960 was told with big bold line graphs which nobody could miss or ignore. The main floor emphasizes heavy industry -- milling machines, power looms, farm equipment, lithographic plants, automobiles, Sputnik, etc. Big, beautiful models tell the story of power development, urban reconstruction, educational growth, jet transport leadership, etc. Brochures in at least 4 languages (English, German, French, and Russian) give more details in a well played propaganda pitch which emphasizes the "hard sell" intent of their show. Up the moving escalators one is lead

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through a well laid out course which shows off their scientific emphasis and discovery accomplishments, their leadership claims in the arts, music, ballet, tapestries, furs, ceramics, glass, food industries, fashions, subways, modern housing developments for student to worker, recreational therapy and resorts, household appliances, etc. Well informed and skillful attendants stand ready to explain without appearing aggressive. Selling goes on everywhere -- Books, records, art reproduction, handicrafts, etc. Excellent Russian music fills the hall at a well modulated level. Clusters of chairs and tables are set up in wide cross passage areas around small signs which note "French Speaking Group", "German Speaking Group", etc., so that rest and conversational opportunities are provided for tired strangers. The lower levels of the building concentrate on nucleonics in medicine and industry, communications, optics, electronics, etc. Excellent models, such as that of the nuclear powered icebreaker, seem to be everywhere. Many pages more could scarcely cover the scope, depth and excellence with which they have blended models, photos, text, graphics, lights, color, design, music, etc. to tell their story with telling impact. Of course, as we well know, another story could be told about the Soviets which could have equal impact on world opinion in the negative sense, but this was scarcely feasible in the euphoria of good will at an international fair.

4. Inside the U.S. exhibition the contrast is somewhat startling. You are reminded of a rambling Los Angeles antique store or rummage sale. However, the latter would probably be better organized -- at least to the extent of having adequate tags and labels on the items displayed. Many random pieces de art stand around in unrelated fashion and some large photos without labels rest on light tables or inside open cylinders and these really puzzle the foreigners. The girl fashion models are charming and colorful but they can't save the day entirely by themselves. The Brass Rail and an American drug store offer a hodge podge ranging from sun glasses to hot dogs and the foreigners seem to enjoy this even without a message. The U.S. Exhibition internally is not a "soft sell". In my opinion it is a "no sell". If this is what was intended it has been achieved. However, I could not help feeling disappointed. Architect Stone did a wonderful job on the U.S. building and we were one up here. The inside effort certainly has come no where near what Fortune, Ed Murrow, Madison Ave., the New York Times and Hollywood could have collectively achieved.

5. Some others may feel as disappointed as I did. One industrialist was using space in the area next to [redacted] to STAT write a big blast at the U.S. Exhibition and to list certain things that could be done yet to save the situation. He spent 7 weeks in Brussels

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gathering data for his story and was invited by the Chief of USIS to set down his observations and recommendations. I was surprised how closely my limited sampling agreed with his findings. Maybe something can still be done to help our case. Maybe most of the foreigners will only pass the facades of the buildings and draw comparisons favorable to our side. Maybe people on holiday will concentrate on random pleasure and forget the "hard sell" or treat it as propaganda. I hope that all these possibilities will lean as hard as possible toward favoring our case and that the final tally of opinion will not be too unfavorable toward the U.S.

Respectfully submitted,

ARTHUR C. LUNDAHL

Orig - Addressee
1 - AC, NE

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